

VZCZCXYZ0001  
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHDM #3914/01 2211307  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
O 091307Z AUG 06  
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0872  
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN 6169  
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT 4012  
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 2564  
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH 7206  
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 1199  
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 4581  
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM 0800  
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL//CCPA//  
INFO RUEHNC/AMEMBASSY NICOSIA 6939

UNCLAS DAMASCUS 003914

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR PA, NEA/ARN, INR/IC/CD, INR/S:STHIBEAULT AND  
JMCCARTER, VOA NEWS CA, NEA/PPD:CBOURGEOIS, DBENZE AND  
AFERNANDEZ, IIP/G/NEA-SA RWINCHESTER  
WHITE HOUSE FOR NSC  
CENTCOM FOR CCPA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KMDR](#) [PREL](#) [KPAO](#) [OPRC](#) [SY](#)

SUBJECT: Damascus Media Reaction: Israeli Operation in Lebanon,  
Syria/Venezuela (8/9)

¶1. Summary: Syrian papers today reported that the Syrian Cabinet listened to a political review by Foreign Minister Mouallem confirming that Arab Foreign Ministers oppose any UN Security Council resolution on Lebanon that doesn't include Lebanese demands, and any other resolution that gives Israel political gains which it has been unable to achieve by aggression.

Papers also reported that Desiree Santos Amaral, Deputy Speaker of the Venezuelan Parliament, conferred with members of the Syrian-Venezuelan Friendship Parliamentary Association headed by Mustafa al-Owaied. During the meeting Amaral reiterated her country's support of Syria's positions regarding legitimate Arab causes, as well as of the Lebanese and Palestinian people's steadfastness in the face of Israeli aggression. Amaral hailed Syria's hosting of the Lebanese displaced by the Israeli aggression on Lebanon. She expressed the Venezuelan parliament's desire to develop cooperation with the Syrian People's Assembly and to activate the role of the Parliamentary Friendship Associations between the two parliaments. For his part, al-Owaied stressed the importance of developing relations between the two parliaments.

Papers also cited an article by US journalist Bert Stephens published in the 'Wall Street Journal' saying that ... Israel has nothing to show from its aggression on Lebanon, underlining that Israel has so far gained no Lebanese territory, has killed no Hezbollah leaders, and has failed to abate the missile barrage that has sent a million Israelis from their homes and workplaces. "Generally speaking, wars are lost either militarily or politically. Israel is losing both ways" Stephens said, clarifying that at the beginning of the war Israeli officials boasted that they had destroyed 50% of Hezbollah's military capabilities and needed just 10 to 14 days to finish. But after a record 140 Katyushas landed on Israel, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert told visiting Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice that he needed another 10 to 14 days. Stephens noted Israel's failure since the beginning of the war, and a change in official Israeli statements, , saying "When the war began, Israeli

officials spoke of 'breaking' Hezbollah; next of evicting Hezbollah from the border area; then of 'degrading' Hezbollah's capabilities; now of establishing an effective multinational force that can police the border." "Israel's goals are becoming less ambitious" he emphasized, noting that Israel seems unable to defeat Hezbollah. He questioned Israel's intelligence capabilities, indicating that the war began with a string of intelligence failures about Hezbollah's military and fighting capabilities.  
End of summary.

## 12. Selected Headlines:

"Vice President Shara and Prime Minister Ottri review with the Egyptian Popular Delegation recent developments in the Arab arena. Shara: The absence of Arab solidarity and US collusion is the main motive for the Israeli aggression against Lebanon" Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 8/9)

"Foreign Minister Mouallem receives phone calls from Iranian, German and Danish FMs, as well as Deputy Russian Foreign Minister. Discussions focus on international diplomatic moves regarding the Lebanese issue. Mouallem warns against adopting a UNSC resolution that does not enjoy Lebanese approval" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 8/9)

"The Cabinet listens to political reviews by Foreign Minister Mouallem and Information Minister Bilal about recent developments in the Israeli aggression against Lebanon and Syrian contacts regarding that issue" (Government-owned Tishreen, 8/9)

"Deputy Foreign Minister Mikdad and Information Minister Bilal review developments in the Israeli aggression against Lebanon with the Chinese envoy and a delegation from the Venezuelan parliament" (Government-owned Tishreen, 8/9)

"Israel commits scattered massacres in Lebanon in the US style.

The Israeli army takes revenge upon Lebanese civilians after big failure in confrontations with Hizbollah" (Government-owned Tishreen, 8/9)

"Heavy missile-shelling by the Lebanese Resistance. Israeli occupation evacuates settlements in Northern Israel. 29 Israeli soldiers killed or injured and eight Israeli tanks destroyed by the Lebanese national resistance. President Lahoud: Lebanon has won politically. The US-French draft resolution meets the demands of Israeli goals" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 8/9)

"US Military Journalist Bert Stephens [in World Street Journal]: Israel is facing its worst humiliation" (Government-owned Tishreen, 8/9)

## 13. Editorial Block Quotes:

-----  
"Before It Is Too Late"

-----  
Omar Jaftali, an editorialist in government-owned Tishreen, wrote (8/9): "The seriousness of Arabs in shouldering their historic responsibility toward Lebanon is now put to a real test.... Some Arab governments moved late, only to save face and after the Lebanese resistance proved not easy to crush....

"Now there are hopes that the Arab diplomatic effort that the Beirut conference initiated will succeed in rectifying the crisis management diplomacy that the United States and France are leading through their Security Council draft resolution, which seeks to lead Lebanon to where Ehud Olmert and his criminal war machine failed to lead it, within the plan to create a new Middle East....

"It is still not too late for Arabs to correct the negative Arab position and make efforts on the international scene to support Lebanon's position and the steadfastness of its valiant national

resistance and to curb Israeli terrorism and reject all the colonial plans and the Security Council formulas that do not serve the interests of Lebanon first and the Arab nation second."

-----  
"A US Slip-up"  
-----

Ali Qasim, an editorialist in government-owned Al-Thawra, wrote (8/9): "The remark by Nabih Berri, Speaker of the Lebanese Parliament, that the Franco-American UNSC draft resolution gives Israel more than it asked for, was perhaps the most expressive description of the essence of this draft...."

"While everyone knew that the US Administration was from the beginning a partner in the aggression, the French position came as a surprise, even to those who placed their bets on it.... The international community and its superpowers showed that they are sliding completely toward the American position...."

"The draft resolution showed the narrow and limited margins within which these powers operate.... After much procrastination, France appeared closer to the American position, while other positions were completely absent...."

"The clarifications that US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice offered regarding the draft resolution added insult to injury. She admitted that the draft seeks to keep Israeli forces in their positions. This clearly shows that the convening of the Security Council was intentionally delayed to enable Israel to occupy Lebanese territory to serve as a chip for bargaining and blackmail...."

"We hope that Arabs, in light of all this, will reconsider their calculations and stop searching for room to maneuver within the roles and positions of others...."

-----  
"Presenting the Victory of Resistance over Aggressors"  
-----

Isam Dari, a commentator in government-owned Tishreen, wrote (8/9): "The Lebanese, who pinned their hopes on a French position different from the US position, were disappointed...."

"France, which falsely claims to care about its ally in the region, Lebanon, has not forgotten its past in the region, in general, and in Lebanon, in particular. It took the side of Israel and the United States...."

"Those who believe that France loves a strong, free, and sovereign Lebanon, are mistaken; France wants Lebanon as it left it six decades ago, weak, frail, and implementing orders. It wants it just as Israel and the United States want it: a link in an old plan and another new plan. The Franco-American UNSC draft resolution, therefore, came to reap the victory of the resistance and present it to Israel...."

-----  
"Open War and Unified Resistance Front"  
-----

Muhammad Suwwan, an editorialist in government-owned Al-Ba'th, said (8/9): "Israel's attacks against Lebanon violate all international laws and conventions and the UN Charter. The right to resistance in Lebanon, Palestine, and Iraq is a sacred right acknowledged by worldly and divine laws...."

"The Lebanese resistance proved to the world that peoples cannot be subjugated even if they pay a heavy price."

"What Israel is doing in Lebanon and the Palestinian territories is very serious.... It minimizes the chances for a political settlement in the region and kills the very basis of peace....

"This dictates that Arab countries and the international community work to force Israel to comply with the requirements of a just and lasting peace....

"Those who fear that the Palestinian-Lebanese-Israeli confrontation might turn into an open war and conflict must not broadcast their fears. This is required if the issue is to move toward a solution. Those who say otherwise are either terrified or happy seeing Israel isolate the Palestinians and the Lebanese and keeping the conflict and the confrontation away from their palaces and despotic regimes."

Corbin